the reasons for non-utilisation of in-house facility and placing an order to an external agency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) placed an order for one set of GSLV strap-on attachment system in January, 1996, which was required for use in the first GSLV, rescheduled to be launched during 1997-98. This GSLV launch took place finally in April, 2001.

(c) The order was placed on M/s KELTEC, a Kerala Government Undertaking at a cost of Rs. 13.7 lakhs. The supply of the system consisting of more than 600 items, started from July, 1997 and was completed in November, 1998. It was decided to place the order on an external agency, taking into account the workload in the internal facilities and also the large number of strap-on attachment systems required for the GSLV vehicles.

Aster Urban Environmental Modelling Project of U.S.A.

3505. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the PRIME MINSTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Bande dekh, tujh par rehegi 'uski' har pal nazar" appearing in the Navbharat Times, dated 9th June, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's views thereon; and

(c) whether Government's permission has been accorded to the Aster Urban Environmental Modelling Project of USA for the study work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Advance Space-borne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) is one of the instruments currently operating onboard the TERRA Satellite launched in December , 1999, as a part of the NASA's Earth Observations System (EOS) programme. The overall goal of EOS is to obtain a better understanding of the interactions between biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and atmosphere. Many universities/research agencies around the world are participating in this scientific study to understand the

global change processes. India is not involved in the programme.

(c) Under the United Nations guidelines, imaging over any part of the world is accepted under the open sky policy. Hence, no permission is needed for imaging India.

Difficulty in releasing funds under MPLADS

3506. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are finding it difficult to release funds under MPLAD Scheme due to financial crunch;

(b) if not, whether all Members of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha have received funds under MPLAD Scheme for first quarter of the year 2001; and

(c) if not, the number of projects pending for release of funds under MPLAD Scheme as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Under Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), each Member of Parliament is entitled to Rs. 2 crores per year. Accordingly, Budget provisions of Rs. 1580 crores for the current financial year have been provided for 790 Members of Parliament @ Rs. 2 crores per MP per annum.

(b) and (c) Under MPLADS funds are released to District Heads on receipt of Expenditure Statement, showing an unsanctioned balance less than Rs. 50 lakhs. In case of all Members of Parliament where the above criterion has been fulfilled, the next instalments of funds during first quarter of 2001 have been released.

Cost escalation and time over-run of central Projects

3507. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Standing Committee on Finance has taken seriously the matter that various projects of the Central Government which has resulted